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AUTHOR Wegmann, Robert G.
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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews findings from a variety of studies, synthesizing available information on the effects of perceived school quality on the composition of the neighborhood served by that school. Two situations were found where such information has been gathered: schools undergoing racial change, and schools which were closed. In both instances the findings generally follow a consistent pattern. There is no increase in departures of families with school aged children from the neighborhood. In racially changing neighborhoods the presence of at least one school aged child was not shown to contribute to the family's intention of moving. Families with school aged children were less likely to plan to move than families without. Perceived school quality did have an effect on the number of new families with children entering a neighborhood. Research findings suggest that schools play an important part in parental decisions to avoid certain neighborhoods served by schools which are, or are likely to become, heavily minority in enrollment. Given the high mobility of American families, this change in who enters the neighborhood can, over time, significantly change the neighborhood's character and composition. Generally negative trends have been observed in neighborhoods where schools have been closed. Data suggests that the absence of a school has an impact which leads to non-entrance of families with school aged children. (Author/MK)

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School Impact on Neighborhood Composition

Robert G. Wegmann
University of Houston at Clear Lake City
Houston, Texas 77058

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Although common sense suggests that the quality of education available in the public schools serving a given neighborhood is an important part of the attractiveness of that neighborhood as a place to live, there has been relatively little research specifically relating educational quality to neighborhood composition. Such data as are available are scattered through studies which, in many cases, were largely concerned with other questions. The purpose of this paper is to gather together the bits and pieces of available evidence on the effect that perceived school quality has on the composition of the neighborhood served by that school, and to attempt to summarize whatever patterns exist in the available information.

Who Moves

In order to put these findings into a broader context, it is useful to first quickly review the general research on mobility patterns.

The United States is a nation in motion. According to one report by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 39% of the residents of metropolitan areas were living in a different house in 1974 than the one in which they lived in 1970. More recently, the Census Bureau reported that 21% of the nation's 75 million households moved during the 12 months ending October 1977, an increase of 1.2 million over the previous year.[1] This high rate of mobility

has an interesting implication. It means that the character of a neighborhood can change substantially depending not only on who moves out, but on who does or does not move in. That is, with such high mobility, any consistent differences in the characteristics of those who enter as compared to those who leave a neighborhood will quickly change the makeup of that neighborhood. If those who move in are consistently richer, older, more often childless, or whatever compared to those who move out, the character of the neighborhood can change in a relatively short period of time even if the mobility rate is no higher than previously.

Research findings on the patterns of American mobility are reasonably consistent. James Simmons,[2] in a study of moves which occur within the same city, found that housing needs generated by life cycle changes cause the majority of moves. He found that life cycle stages account for at least five of the eight or nine moves that can typically be expected in a lifetime, with the most common reason for voluntary moves being the need for more space for a growing family. Most moves are short and within familiar territory, with the location of the house generally less important than its characteristics. Distance to the job seemed to be of little importance in choosing one house over another (the study, of course, was done before the energy crisis and gasoline shortage). Simmons also found that white middle to high income families

who remain within the city have a family structure and employment characteristics different from their counterparts in the suburbs; specifically, he found that these families have an almost total absence of school-aged children.

Edgar Butler and Edward Kaiser,[3] in a nation-wide study of 1,476 metropolitan households, found that those planning to move tend to be larger, younger, full families with an oldest child under 6, or non-white. Of the most recent moves made by the sample, 28% were within the same neighborhood. Another 57% were outside the neighborhood but within the same metropolitan area. Only about 15% involved moving to a different metropolitan area.

Peter Rossi's[4] study of four census tracts in Philadelphia involved interviewing 444 recent movers. Only census tracts less than 20% Black and with fewer than 15% foreign born were considered; the few Blacks who were in the four study areas were not interviewed. Those interviewed stated that their primary concerns in seeking new housing were space and design requirements (heating, layout, utilities). Asked about the attractions of the present dwelling over others considered, 60% answered costs, 38% neighborhood reputation, 31% the kind of people in the neighborhood and only 28% schools. The cost of a dwelling was the major "clinching" factor determining whether it was chosen over its competitors.

Housing needs were determined primarily by composition of the household. Families change as they go through a life cycle of growth and decline. Large families renting small apartments are the most mobile of all households, especially when they are in the earliest life cycle stages. Neighborhoods characterized by unusually rapid turnover provide housing for households in those life cycle stages which are particularly unstable.

Alden Spear, Jr.[5] reported an unusually thorough study based on interviews with a representative sample of 2,264 Rhode Island residents. Those interviewed were either married, or unmarried but over the age of 21. The study found that only 9% of all moves were attributable to job changes. (It should be noted that Rhode Island is so small that the authors were dealing with essentially a single labor market area.) Nearly half of the moves were related to housing or neighborhood factors. The overall relationship between mobility and age was found to follow the well established pattern of mobility declining with age. Life cycle stage, however, was found to have important independent effects. Nearly everyone moves just after marriage. As children come, housing needs increase. When death, divorce, or separation break the marriage union, the probability of moving is substantially increased.

There is a general pattern of decline in mobility rates with duration of residence for renters in all age groups. Mobility rates for homeowners are virtually constant with duration of residence and considerably below the lowest rate for renters. Thus homeownership appears to be an important factor in distinguishing movers from stayers. On the average, renters were 4 to 5 times more likely to move than homeowners.

Ronald McAllister, Edward Kaiser and Edgar Butler[6] studied the differences between black and white resential mobility. Their study used data from a two wave national survey of residential mobility patterns and residential preferences in United States metropolitan areas. Initial interviews were conducted with 1,476 households in 43 metropolitan areas in the fall of 1966. Follow-up interviews were conducted in the fall of 1969. The authors found that approximately 10% more blacks than whites were movers during the period between surveys. However, all but 4% of blacks remained within the same city or town as compared with 17% of whites. The study found renters to be much more mobile than homeowners. High black mobility results from the fact that most blacks are renters. Nearly 21% of moves made by blacks were forced, as compared with only 6% for whites. Only one black respondent moved as a

result of a job change; 12% of all white household moves were for that reason. The authors concluded that racial categories not only move differently, as previously reported; they apparently also do so for different reasons.

These research results provide a reasonably consistent picture of American residential mobility. Most moves, though related to age, are in fact also independently related to life cycle stage (someone marrying at 30 is likely to move because almost everyone moves at marriage, not because he or she is 30). Most moves are made within the same metropolitan area, and often within the same section of town. Relatively few moves are made for job-related reasons; nor has distance to work been a major consideration. The primary considerations have been space and cost. Renters move much more often than owners. Blacks move more often than whites, but this is because blacks are much more likely to be renters. The overall American mobility rate is high, and increasing.

The Schools and Mobility

What part do schools play in determining moving patterns? First of all, a review of the available research suggests no strong or consistent evidence indicating that schools have much impact in motivating parents to leave a given neighborhood. Moving is expensive, and most school situations are

presumably not so bad as to justify uprooting the whole family. School problems are not permanent; eventually the student will finish at a particular school, and move on. Further, there are other solutions for school problems besides moving; often, some kind of alternative schooling can be found.

Admittedly, many studies do not distinguish between respondents with children in school and those without them, so that some of the impact of schools in motivating parents to leave a neighborhood may be lost, or "buried" in the data. Nonetheless, most studies report results consistent with those of Stanislav Kasl and Ernest Harburg, who interviewed 1,000 married adults in Detroit, and did not find dissatisfaction with the local schools to be particularly related to dislike of the neighborhood. Reviewing the expressed desire to move out, they found that dislike of a neighborhood was more clearly related to perceptions of its safety than to evaluation of its facilities, including schools. More recently, John Carlisi, Richard Faust and Ronald Pasquariello analyzed a survey conducted in two multi-ethnic, blue-collar neighborhoods, one in Baltimore and the other in Cincinnati. They concluded that "in choosing a neighborhood the school was, or at least appears to be, important; and in deciding to leave it was not."[7]

One situation which provides a possible opportunity to measure the impact of school conditions on motivation to leave an area can be found in the racially

changing neighborhood. For reasons that will be discussed shortly, the schools in such situations almost always become heavily black rather more quickly than the neighborhood itself. Since many white parents are hesitant to send their children to heavily black schools, one would expect that white parents of school-age children might be the first to leave such neighborhoods.

In fact, the research evidence does not suggest that this is the case. Eleanor Wolf,[8] in her study of a racially changing Detroit neighborhood, noted that the moving order of households was primarily determined by family income, with more prosperous families moving more readily than those with lower incomes. David Varady[9] conducted telephone interviews with 943 families in two adjacent communities in the Philadelphia metropolitan area in 1969. One community was located on the western edge of Philadelphia, adjacent to one of Philadelphia's three black ghettos. Whites living in this area could realistically expect that all sections of the area would have a black majority within a relatively short period. More than half of the white families in this racially mixed community reported that they planned to move within the next three years; less than a fifth of the white families in the adjacent racially stable, predominantly white community gave the same response. The presence of at least one school-aged child was <u>not</u> shown to contribute to the family's

intention of moving from the racially changing community. In both areas, families with school-aged children were less likely to plan to move than families without school-aged children.

School Quality and Neighborhood Non-Entrance

Although the available research does not provide strong evidence that parental perception of school quality is a determining factor in the decision to move out of a neighborhood, the situation is less clear when it comes to the decision to move into a neighborhood. First of all, given that a decision to move has been made, the financial and social costs of avoiding a particular neighborhood and moving instead to another are ordinarily much lower than the costs of deciding to move in the first place. In many cases there may be essentially no cost at all in chosing one neighborhood over another. Thus even a factor which carried relatively little weight in the total decision to move might significantly influence such a decision. Secondly, the issue of why one did not enter a neighborhood but instead chose another has been little investigated. In most major metropolitan areas there are a wide variety of neighborhoods where one might potentially buy or rent a home, and while the people who did enter a given neighborhood are there to be studied, those who

did not enter are, by definition, in any number of other places. How would one find them to ask why they did not enter the neighborhood being studied?

Despite these problems, there are bits and pieces of evidence to be found in the available research on schools and neighborhoods which strongly suggest that schools play an important part in parental decisions to avoid certain neighborhoods served by schools which are, or are likely to become, heavily minority in enrollment. As Gary Orfield[10] notes in a review of the research on school desegregation, more than a fourth of the public believes (inaccurately) that the test scores of white students decline sharply in desegregated schools. When these misconceptions about the educational effects of school desegregation are added to parental fears about student safety, and parental perceptions of desegregated schools as of lower social status, the evidence suggests that these perceptions motivate at least some parents to avoid racially mixed schooling.[11]

Why might conditions in the local school play a larger part in housing decisions than the characteristics of the neighborhood itself? For one thing, school relationships are necessarily more intimate than neighborhood relationships. One can easily ignore someone who lives down the block, much

less several blocks away. It is much more difficult to ignore someone who sits in the next seat in school, or plays on the same playground. Harvey Molotch,[12] in a study of the South Shore area of Chicago, notes that elementary school boundaries play an important part in the neighboring behavior of school children. Both the pattern of mutual visits within childhood peer groups and the neighboring behavior of adults, often influenced by prior contacts made by children, are involved. He cites a study by Roper which found that the bulk of neighboring behavior in middle class settings was due directly or indirectly to the visiting patterns of young children. He also notes that the school, as a social institution, functions as a locus for much community interaction.

The neighborhood itself, on the other hand, may generate very few social relationships. Norman Bradburn, Seymour Sudman, Gaylen Gockel and Joseph Noel[13] made a study of stably integrated neighborhoods into which both blacks and whites were still moving, and where the neighborhood was expected to stay integrated over the next five years. Some 200 such neighborhoods were reviewed. Most were found to be overwhelmingly white, and at some distance from the ghetto. The researchers found that, although there was

little reaction to a small number of blacks living within the neighborhood, the amount of interracial neighboring was actually very low. They concluded that the fact that black and white adults live near each other does not necessarily imply that they do any socializing.

Chester Rapkin and William Grigsby,[14] in a study of four areas in Philadelphia, found that a number of whites buying in racially mixed neighborhoods were not even aware, at the time that they bought, that the neighborhoods were racially mixed. Jean Milgram,[15] in a discussion of efforts made to strengthen and encourage successful integrated communities, reports that many whites who would prefer to live in a liberal community with a cosmopolitan racial mix are deterred from doing so by the racial composiiton of the public schools in the area. She cites the examples of Denver, Nashville, and Norfolk as places where white move-ins to racially mixed areas actually increased once the entire school system was desegregated. She reports that it is easier to get whites to live in a neighborhood which has a substantial black population than it is to get them to send their children to a substantially integrated school.

Eleanor Wolf and Charles Lebeaux,[16] in a review of research on race and

class in the changing city, report that schools are of crucial importance in the process of racial transition. Neighborhood racial change often means class change; a substantial proportion of upwardly mobile, "respectable working-class" black families have reached their present financial status only because both husband and wife are employed. Although their total family income level may equal (or even be above) that of the neighborhood into which they move, the academic performance of their children may still be below that of the rest of the school. Even a small proportion of "difficult" pupils in the local public school may have a negative impact on the school's reputation. These researchers report that the typical middle class neighborhood undergoing racial change is more likely to retain users of parochial schools, or older people without children.

The fact that upwardly mobile blacks who move into previously white areas are often only marginally middle class, with both adults working, may be important for education in other ways than simply the impact on student preparation and academic motivation. A study by John Collins and Bryan Downes[17] indicates that such families, facing considerable financial pressures in their attempt to maintain a middle class lifestyle, were significantly less willing to vote for the taxes necessary to maintain high educational

expenditures in the suburb studied. The authors report that black parents in the study were apparently in a more precarious financial situation, tended to compare their high taxes with the relatively lower tax burden they had carried while still living in the central city, and lacked a tradition of high tax support.

An interesting commentary on the role of the school in an ethnically mixed area, and the situation of majority and minority children in such schools, is found in Gerald Suttles' study of a low income area in Chicago. He reports that 60% of the white children attend parochial schools; of the public schools, five "belong to" the blacks, two to whites, and two are in the process of changing hands. All the parochial schools belong to whites; three are held by the Italians and two are at issue between the Italians and the Mexicans. Suttles found that:

> Schools, like recreational establishments, are consigned to ethnic groups on multiple criteria: location, precedent, ethnicity of staff, and ethnicity of student body. Where all these criteria coincide, the few minority group students that remain usually take on the ingratiating manner of a humble guest. With this behavior they can survive and sometimes even advance to close friendship. If they do not accept this status, they must fend for themselves.[18]

Where the "ownership" of a school is still in doubt there may be mutual tolerance or mutual arrogance. But Suttles found no situation where persons of different ethnicity simply assumedeach other's good intentions. He notes that the schools, whose placement and composition cannot be controlled by the local

residents, arouse particularly strong apprehensions. Religious and recreational institutions, on the other hand, are more subject to control and thus provide safer ethnic enclosures.

Almost a decade ago, the report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders[19] noted that transition from black to white within a given neighborhood does not require any panic or flight by the original white residents. It requires only the failure or refusal of other whites to fill the vacancies resulting from normal turnover. The report goes on to note that efforts to stop massive transition by persuading white residents to remain will ultimately fail unless whites outside the neighborhood can be persuaded to move in. As has already been noted, the situation within the public schools serving such a neighborhood can be a key factor in determining whether or not whites are, in fact, willing to move into the neighborhood. Rapkin and Grigsby, in the study cited earlier, report that white buyers in racially mixed neighborhoods in Philadelphia were disproportionately likely to have household heads who were Catholic. They also note that there were numerous parochial schools in the area, which few Negroes attended. Molotch's study of the South Shore area of Chicago also reports that it was widely believed that Catholics, using the parochial schools, were much more likely to remain

in a racially changing neighborhood. His study concludes by noting that, for all intents and purposes, whites with school-aged children are no longer moving into South Shore and that most of those who once lived there are gone. Thus South Shore's historical pattern as the home of middle-class, child-rearing whites is over.

Other studies provide additional evidence of the specific roles played by schools in neighborhood change. Charles Clotfelter,[20] in a study of Atlanta, reviewed census tracts which were 90% or more white. He found housing prices related to the percentage Negro in the local high school. Specifically, housing prices fell during the decade in those tracts served by high schools which experienced greater desegregation, relative to tracts served by high schools where less desegregation took place. Since housing prices are quite sensitive to the law of supply and demand, this at least suggests that demand for such homes may have decreased, contributing to the fall in prices. No increase in persons leaving the area would be required to produce this effect; a decline in those seeking to enter would be sufficient. John Finger,[21] also commenting on the Atlanta situation, notes that Atlanta never used busing to bring about school desegregation. Rather, the nearest white area was assigned to a black school, leaving the rest of the city uninvolved. The affected area then quickly lost school-aged children, and the process repeated itself.

In another study,[22] Clotfelter found that, in the absence of school integration, white families living in the integrated neighborhoods of Baltimore and Atlanta tended to be larger than those living in predominantly white areas. When the schools were integrated, however, the number of whites under the age of 14 decreased. The data suggest that an increase in the proportion of minority students in the public schools of ten percentage points would lead to a decrease in the proportion of whites under 14 of two to three percentage points. Clotfelter concludes that school desegregation tends to increase the resistance of at least some whites, specifically those with children, to living in integrated neighborhoods.

Along the same lines, an article in the New York Times[23] reports that the most frequent request received from those working to maintain a stable integrated neighborhood is for information on how to deal with real estate practices. The second most important question is what to do about schools. The article reports that the stable, integrated neighborhoods in New York are affluent and not dependent on public schools.

The impact of a racially changing school on a racially changing neighborhood is generally strengthened by the fact that Blacks moving into these neighborhoods tend to be disproportionately young Black families with children. Similar white families do not seem to be attracted to such

neighborhoods. Thus the proportion of black students in a school may be substantially ahead of the proportion of black citizens living within the school attendance area. In a Milwaukee study which used block by block census data to compare the racial proportions in schools with the racial make-up in the school attendance area, the following results were obtained:[24]

RACIAL PROPORTIONS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS AND THEIR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREAS

School	Percent Black in Attendance Area April 1970	Percent Black in School Fall 1969	Percent Black in School Fall 1970
Parkman Junior High	76	98	86
Franklin Elementary	69	95	94
Garden Homes Elementary	32	77	84
Green Bay Elementary	66	87	92
Keefe Elementary	90	97	97
LaFollette Elementary	94	100	99
Philipp Elementary	58	95	94
Wells Junior High	16	89	71
Brown Elementary	88	97	98
Elm Elementary	44	64	63
McDowell Elementary	12	48	55
27th Street Elementary	7	17	18
Walnut Elementary	61	79	78
Wisconsin Elementary	5	12	11
Peckham Junior High	25	51	69
Auer Elementary	67	89	93
Clark Elementary	48	61	68
Clemens Elementary	5	14	12
38th Street Elementary	1	4	6
Townsend Elementary	2	11	15

As can be seen, in every case the proportion of black students in the school is above (and generally substantially above) the proportion of black citizens in the area served by the school. Similar findings are reported by Ozzie Edwards[25] in a study which compared 1950 and 1960 Chicago census data. Edwards found that census tracts in the early stages of racial succession

generally have disproportionately high numbers of younger black families. Whereas such families seem to lead the way in moving into previously all white areas, the number of younger white families decreases rapidly in such areas. Edwards suggests that the presence of younger children may produce a greater sensitivity to residential succession and/or create a unique set of problems for white families living in areas where the racial composition is changing. The impact of this pattern can be seen in one statistic mentioned in the Collins and Downes study of University City in the St. Louis area. Although approximately 28% of University City's overall population was black, black enrollment in the public schools had reached 65%.

There are factors other than school conditions, of course, which lead to white non-entrance into racially changing areas. As Wolf and Lebeaux point out, real estate people are crucial in this process. They can do more to change the racial composition of an area by not showing homes to whites than by urging those who are there to move. It is significant, however, that when citizens groups have tried to directly recruit whites to move into integrated areas, they have found many willing to rent, but fewer to buy. If things go badly for a renter, it is relatively easy to move on; the commitment involved in buying is much greater. This may be important if, indeed,

non-entrance is the key to the school's impact on the neighborhood. Because many apartments are not available to families with children, it is those families who are concerned about the neighborhood school who are more likely to be interested in purchasing than the single person or married couple without children.

John Deikoff,[26] in a report on the Ludlow area of suburban Cleveland, notes that it was necessary for the Ludlow Community Association to found both a loan company and community housing program in order to attract whites to Ludlow, a racially mixed area. As Harold Rose suggests,[27] whites and blacks seldom compete for housing in the same market over an extended period of time; special structures and new organizations were necessary in order to bring this about. Molotch, in his Chicago study, concluded that while normal mobility makes neighborhood racial change possible, it is when housing markets are so structured that blacks continuously constitute the bulk of those who move into existing vacancies that racial change becomes inevitable. It is also interesting to note that a study by Howard Aldrich and Albert Reiss, Jr.[28] reported a similar dropoff in white purchases of business opportunities in racially changing areas. That is, the sales of white-owned businesses were reasonably stable as racial transition proceeded, but the number of

whites willing to purchase a business in such an area decreased substantially. Thus more businesses became minority-owned, not because of increased white departure, but because of decreased white entrance.

Finally, there is the interesting comment in John Finger's report (already cited) on the situation in Charlotte, North Carolina. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg school busing order did not involve those already racially mixed schools which were located in integrated neighborhoods. Since many parents were unhappy about having their children bused, Finger notes that this made these neighborhoods more attractive. In fact, in some of my own research,[29] I happened upon a series of schools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district which, unlike other schools in racially mixed areas, had not only remained racially stable, but had actually increased their white proportions. These schools, it turned out, were located in racially integrated areas, and hence were not involved in the busing order. Here is a clear, and indeed striking, example of the school situation leading to the disproportionate entrance of white families into racially mixed areas which they otherwise might not have been expected to seek out.

Impact of School Closings

Another index of the impact of the neighborhood school on who moves into a neighborhood can be found in an unpublished paper by Richard Andrews,

Roger Soder and Donald Eisman[30]. Their survey of 60 school districts found that over 80% had either closed schools or planned to do so in the coming year. Generally, school officials observed negative trends in the neighborhoods where schools had been closed. It was found that such neighborhoods diminish in viability after the elementary school is eliminated. Some neighborhoods, depending on the area, were completely destroyed. Young families did more selective buying of houses in areas where schools were closed, and there was a decline in the number of children residing in these areas. The data at least suggest that the absence of a school had an impact which led to the non-entrance of families with school-aged children, and this in turn significantly changed the composition of the neighborhood.

A recent study of the impact of closing four Seattle public elementary schools reported the following:

Summit School, with an attendance area including Seattle's central business district, was closed and its 200 students were then bused to other schools. As a result, there was a decline in the school-age population in the former school attendance area.

Mann School was closed to aid desegregation; after closing, the black students were transferred to schools in other parts of town. No decline in school-age

population was found, though there was an increased housing vacancy rate in the area nearest the school.

Georgetown School, which was projected to have less than 50 elementary students by 1980, was in an area faced with a massive amount of demolition due to industrial and commercial development. Students were transferred to a new school which opened nearby. Any decrease in school-age population presumably would have occurred anyway.

Interlake School, in a predominantly residential area in the northern part of town, was closed to aid desegregation. High school students then used the building, while 460 elementary students were assigned to three other schools. Enrollment of students from the Interlake area declined after the school was closed. The rate of property sales in the area was found to be higher than in a control neighborhood nearby, which might seem to indicate a pattern of families moving from the area because of the school closure. This hypothesis is reinforced by the finding that 28% of those with children in school who moved, compared to 10% of those with children who stayed, mentioned school quality as the single most important aspect of neighborhood satisfaction. There was also some drop in the value of housing in the Interlake area in the year following school closure. Since closure, there has been a pattern of

increasing commercial investment in the area, compared to increased residential investment in the nearby control area. Surprisingly, though,

> analysis showed that the third and fourth grade student sample at Interlake had fewer moves than did Allen /the nearby control school/ during the years following closure. This would seem to be a contradictory result. The most obvious explanation is that Interlake was less attractive to new families with school age children.[31]

Again, then, it would seem that the primary effect of the school closures was in no longer attracting families with children, rather than in driving out those families already there at an accelerated rate. Over time, of course, the effect is the same, and the character of the neighborhood changes significantly.

Parochial schools as well as public schools may produce such effects. A recent paper reports on the impact on a neighborhood in South Bend, Indiana served by two parochial schools, St. Casimir's and St. Adalbert's. The heavily Polish neighborhood, despite a long history of cohesiveness, was beginning to show signs of decline. Despite some parental opposition, St. Casimir's School was closed. The author reports that

> The closing of St. Casimir's is considered by all interested parties to have been the most crucial factor in the deterioration of the neighborhood. New Polish families are not moving in, but are instead buying homes in the parish neighborhood of St. Adalbert's where the school is flourishing and parish activities are at an all time high.[32]

Here again, it is interesting that the report stresses a drop in those moving

into the area rather than any acceleration of those moving out.

Conclusion

The bulk of the evidence strongly suggests that the primary impact of perceived school quality on neighborhood composition will be in either attracting or deterring new residents who have school-aged children. Of course, a sufficiently bad school situation will actually cause some residents to move away. However, most school problems seem to be such that, given the social and financial costs of moving, most families will be more inclined to either live with them or simply seek other schooling opportunities. On the other hand, since most cities provide a wide variety of housing options, even at the same price level, the cost to a family of avoiding one area because of a negative school situation and seeking another is a great deal lower. It is therefore quite reasonable to find that the main impact of school quality, or at least parental perception of school quality, on neighborhood composition is an indirect one.

Given the high rates of American mobility cited at the beginning of this paper, such an indirect impact can be of very great consequence. In fact, over a period of years, such an impact can significantly change the

character and composition of the entire neighborhood. It is therefore quite reasonable that individuals and groups who are concerned with maintaining the familial character of a neighborhood will need to pay particular attention to the reputation of the neighborhood school.

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11. To report this is not to agree with it or approve it; but these attitudes seem widespread, and it is what people believe that governs their actions, even when these beliefs are erroneous. See Robert Wegmann, "White Flight and School Resegregation: Some Hypotheses," Phi Delta Kappan 58 (January 1977):389-393.
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